

Message Text

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61/47

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AF-10 CU-05 IO-14

DRC-01 /143 W

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O R 121228Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5022

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

SECDEF

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 11379

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 3)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MILL, TH, MOPS, XO

SUBJECT: U.S. INDIAN OCEAN PATROLS FROM UTAPAO

REF: A. STATE 132839; B. BANGKOK 10805; C. BANGKOK 11314;

D. BANGKOK 11324

SUMMARY: THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMED AMBASSADOR KINTNER TODAY THAT THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT REQUESTS THE U.S. TO STOP ALL RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS FROM UTAPAO OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT WE WOULD, OF COURSE, COMPLY BUT GAVE HIM BACKGROUND OF PAST FLIGHTS FROM UTAPAO, STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE TO THAILAND OF A BALANCE OF POWER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND ASKED THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT KEEP SECRET

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THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION. THE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

FOR DIEGO GARCIA, FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST, WILL APPARENTLY NOT BE AFFECTED. THE RTG DECISION WAS MADE TO AVOID DOMESTIC CRITICISM, MFA TOLD US, SINCE THE AGREEMENT UPON WHICH AMERICAN FORCES ARE BASED IN THAILAND IS ONLY TO COUNTER AGGRESSION IN INDOCHINA. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR KINTNER MET THE FOREIGN MINISTER JULY 12 TO DISCUSS INDIAN OCEAN MATTERS. PRESENT ON THE THAI SIDE, IN ADDITION TO THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, WERE THE UNDER SECRETARY, AMBASSADOR ANAN, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INFORMATION, AND THE AMERICAN DESK OFFICER. AMBASSADOR KINTNER HAD SOUGHT THE APPOINTMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING U.S. NAVAL FLIGHTS OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN ORIGINATING IN THAILAND AT UTAPAO ROYAL THAI NAVY AIRFIELD AND THE APPROVAL OF THESE FLIGHTS BY THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT. THE THAI HAD DELAYED IN GRANTING THE APPOINTMENT AND, AS THE MEETING BEGAN, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THEY HAD PROBABLY DONE SO WHILE WORKING OUT THEIR OWN POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT. (SHORTLY BEFORE DEPARTING FOR THE MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY PHONE CALL FROM THE U.S. MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER AT RTG THAT A SUPREME COMMAND DECISION TERMINATING U.S. RECCE FLIGHTS FROM UTAPAO HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE.) FOLLOWING THE AMBASSADOR'S INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE SETTING FORTH THE PURPOSE OF HIS CALL, THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN WAS ALSO A MATTER OF CONCERN TO HIS GOVERNMENT AND ONE WHICH THEY WISHED TO DISCUSS. HE SAID THAT IT HAD BECOME A DIFFICULT SUBJECT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST THAT THE U.S. "BE GOOD ENOUGH TO TRY TO OMIT DOING ANYTHING IN CONNECTION WITH THE INDIAN OCEAN FROM UTAPAO" AND "THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE U.S. OMIT SENDING OF RECONNAISSANCE PLANES FROM UTAPAO TO THE INDIAN OCEAN."

2. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THE EXPLANATION BY THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT TO THE THAI PUBLIC HAS BEEN THAT U.S. FORCES ARE STATIONED IN THAILAND ONLY TO COUNTER AGGRESSION IN INDOCHINA. ANYTHING BEYOND THIS, HE SAID, WOULD MAKE THE THAI GOVERNMENT AN EVEN GREATER TARGET OF STUDENTS

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AND OTHER CRITICS. HE SAID HE HOPED THE U.S. WOULD ACCEPT HIS GOVERNMENT'S WISHES.

3. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THE U.S. WOULD, OF COURSE, DO NOTHING IN THAILAND TO VIOLATE THE DESIRES OF THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT BUT SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT AND TO DISCUSS IT FURTHER. AS AN INTRODUCTION, HE REVIEWED THE RIVALRY

BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION SINCE WORLD WAR II AND THE INCREASING BUILDUP OF MILITARY STRENGTH BY THE SOVIET UNION VIS-A-VIS THE FREE WORLD, INCLUDING NAVAL BUILDUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN DURING RECENT YEARS. THE AMBASSADOR OUTLINED THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CONTROL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR CONCERNED NATIONS, INCLUDING THAILAND, SHOULD THE SOVIETS OR PRC COME TO CONTROL THE INDIAN OCEAN.

4. THE AMBASSADOR RELATED THE HISTORY OF U.S. NAVY P-3 FLIGHTS FROM UTAPAO OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN SINCE 1969, POINTING OUT THAT THE U.S. HAD KEPT THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT INFORMED THROUGH SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS (FORWARD). THE AMBASSADOR ALSO RECOUNTED THE BRIEFINGS OF OFFICIALS OF THE SUPREME COMMAND AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SINCE LAST OCTOBER. AMBASSADOR KINTNER EXPLAINED THE PURPOSES OF RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS AND PROVIDED INFORMATION ABOUT THE DATA DERIVED FROM THEM. HE STRESSED THE BENEFITS TO THE THAI OF INFORMATION SUCH AS WEATHER DATA ALREADY PROVIDED ROUTINELY FROM RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS, AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO SHARE ANY INFORMATION DESIRED BY THE THAI.

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

5. AMBASSADOR KINTNER SAID HE WOULD REPORT THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO HIS GOVERNMENT. ON THE BASIS OF HIS CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON, HE KNEW THERE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE CONCERN BECAUSE WASHINGTON REGARDED THESE FLIGHTS AS ESSENTIAL TO OUR EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. HE STRESSED HIS HOPE THAT THE THAI WOULD STUDY CAREFULLY THE BRIEFING PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS HE WAS LEAVING WITH THEM ON THE SUBJECT, AND RECONSIDER THE DECISION IN THE FUTURE.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED HIS OWN CONCERN ABOUT THE SOVIET BUILDUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, BUT REITERATED THAT USE OF FACILITIES IN THAILAND HAD BEEN RESTRICTED TO INDOCHINA IN THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT (VIZ THE 1967 PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING U.S. OPERATIONS OUT OF UTAPAO). HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT HAD JOINED OTHER COUNTRIES IN CALLING FOR AN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF
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PEACE AND HAD MADE PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO IT. AMBASSADOR ANAN, WHO WAS SOMEWHAT AGGRESSIVE IN HIS COMMENTS DURING THE MEETING, ADDED THAT THAILAND HAD ALSO SIGNED THE KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION ON THE ZONE OF PEACE AND CANNOT FOLLOW CONTRADICTIONARY POLICIES IN DIFFERENT AREAS. HE ALSO STATED HIS COUNTRY'S DESIRE TO AVOID CRITICISM IN THE U.N.

7. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE HOPED THE U.S. COULD FIND ANOTHER MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ORDER TO HELP THE CURRENT THAI GOVERNMENT WITH ITS "VERY DIFFICULT POLITICAL SURROUNDINGS." THE AMBASSADOR SAID ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE DIFFICULT, SINCE CLARK AIR FORCE BASE IS SOME 1,500 MILES AWAY. THE THAI SUGGESTED AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, DIEGO GARCIA, AND IRAN AS POSSIBLE BASES FOR RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID WE WOULD BE LOOKING INTO EVERY POSSIBILITY.

8. CHARUNPHAN SAID THAT TIMES HAVE CHANGED AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT MUST NOW EXPLAIN ITS POSITION TO THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND GUARD AGAINST CRITICISM FROM STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS. HE SAID THE THAI DO NOT LIKE TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR FRIENDS AND WISH TO COOPERATE, BUT THEY MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THEIR INTERNAL SITUATION. HE SAID IT IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO "SUFFER LESS IMPORTANT THINGS" IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE MORE IMPORTANT. HE CITED THE STRONG STATEMENTS THAT BOTH HE AND THE DEPUTY FOREIGN

MINISTER HAVE MADE REGARDING THE NECESSITY OF U.S. FORCES BEING STATIONED IN THAILAND TO DETER NORTH VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION, AND HE SAID THEY WOULD STAND FIRM ON THIS MATTER.

9. THE MEETING WAS FRIENDLY AND CORDIAL THROUGHOUT AND OTHER SUBJECTS WERE DISCUSSED WHICH WILL BE REPORTED BY OTHER MESSAGES. THE MEETING ENDED WITH AMBASSADOR KINTNER ASKING THE THAI TO PLEASE KEEP THIS MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION, AND SAYING THAT WE HOPED WE COULD REOPEN THE SUBJECT IN THE FUTURE.

10. COMMENT: THE AMBASSADOR DELIBERATELY AVOIDED RAISING THE QUESTION OF SUPPORT FLIGHTS DURING THE MEETING AND,
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BASED ON INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM RTG SUPREME COMMAND (SEE BANGKOK 11324), WE BELIEVE THE RTG BAN APPLIES ONLY TO RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS.

11. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: THE HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY OF THE PRESENT RTG TO INTERNAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS CHARGES FROM ADJACENT COUNTRIES THAT IT HAS BECOME A U.S. STOOGES IS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS THAI DECISION. THE ISSUE BECAME PUBLIC DURING MY WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS BY MALADROIT TIMING OF A MAY 15 P-3 FLIGHT FROM UTAPAO WHILE NEWSMEN WERE AT THE BASE TO OBSERVE INITIAL DRAWDOWN OF B-52 AIRCRAFT. WHILE IN WASHINGTON I CONVEYED MY APPREHENSION OVER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DISCLOSURE IN LIGHT OF SENSITIVITY OF THE RTG OFFICIALS TO A STEADY BARRAGE OF ATTACK AGAINST U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE. TODAY IN EFFECT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD US THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO DEFEND OUR UTILIZATION OF THE RTAF BASES IF WE DO NOT INSIST THAT HE ATTEMPT AT THIS TIME TO JUSTIFY RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN FROM UTAPAO. END AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT.

12. THE MFA HAS REPLIED TO QUERIES REGARDING AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER BY CONFIRMING MEETING AND STATING THAT SUBJECTS INCLUDED LAOS, CAMBODIA, AND SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE SITUATION IN THAILAND, PARTICULARLY THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE, AND THE RECENT THAI FLAG DESECRATION INCIDENT. MFA SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN A FEW DAYS, AT WHICH SOMETHING MORE ABOUT THE MEETING MIGHT BE DISCUSSED. COMMENT: THIS IS ENCOURAGING INDICATION THAT MFA IS NOT RUNNING TO THE PRESS WITH A PREPARED STATEMENT ON THE INDIAN OCEAN FLIGHTS WITHOUT ALLOWING TIME TO DIGEST INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE AMBASSADOR.
KINTNER

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